

WRESTLING OBSERVER YEARBOOK

Welcome to the special Yearbook double-issue of the Wrestling Observer. Because the awards section took up 14 pages, that leaves me just two pages for news so I'll just touch on everything briefly and go into more details next time. The next issue, and final one of this set (remember, this double issue counts for two on the subscriptions) will probably be done next weekend because of news and letters backlog (I promise to start the letters section next time). In other words, it's already time to renew as all subscriptions expire with the next issue. Those in foreign countries are advised to renew as soon as possible to avoid missing the first issue of the next set. If you have an "S" on your address label, it means you will receive the first issue of the next set as there are many readers who this is their first issue and I didn't want anyone to miss the yearbook. Those with "S" on the address label can renew for the next set of four issues (actually it would be three for you) for \$3.75 while all others the price is \$5 to me at 111 Clifford #7, Turlock, CA 95380-4663.

Briefly now, some news notes:

Crockett promotions: Crowds continue to be very impressive, particularly for Flair-Rhodes bouts (mainly double count outs). 1/5 Charlotte drew another sellout of 10,200 for Flair DCCR Dusty, TA pinned Tully, Animal of the Warriors pinned Ivan Koloff, Hawk pinned Thunderfoot and Morton-Gibson beat Barbarian. Black Bart and Arn Anderson pinned Kernodle. . . Arn Anderson won the TV tourney 1/4 in Greensboro pinning Wahoo McDaniel in the finals. I believe Magnum T.A. beat Harley Race on that card as well. . . Abdullah the Butcher left for a tour of Africa, bringing prelin wrestler Gerald Finley with him. Superstar Billy Graham's disappearance is because he threw out his back lifting someone up about a month ago. He's working about one show a week, trying to let his back heal up and when it does, will be back full-time. His physique probably will shrink up because you can't do heavy lifting with a bad back. Mike Davis & Tommy Lane are leaving for Puerto Rico. The 1/1 Omni show drew 14,000 at Roadies-Dusty beat Andersons-Flair in the bout where Ole got carted out, plus Midnight Express beat Rock'n'Roll Express non title. Tickets were \$5 across the-board. . . As mentioned before, most Crockett cities will be running \$10 to \$15 prices, particularly when Flair and the Roadies appear. . . Baron Von Raschke is coming in as a heel managed by Paul Jones, to replace Krusher Khrushchev who apparently suffered a real severe leg injury this past week when his knee gave out when he came off the top ropes. . . Krushchev had lost the Mid Atlantic title to Sam Houston 1/11 at the WTBS tapings in Atlanta (tapes are now done on Saturday a.m.'s) in a bout where the Roadies interfered. . . Loss of Krushchev should change the plan for a TA vs. Nikita feud, as Nikita will be needed to team with Ivan against the Roadies everywhere. . . The most recent Meadowlands show (12/29) drew 12,000 fans, but with the tickets \$10 to \$25--gate was \$205,000 which may be the largest ever in that state. . . 2/20 in Baltimore has an incredible line-up: Ivan & Nikita vs Roadies in a cage, Flair vs Dusty, Hansen vs Slaughter, Morton-Gibson vs Condrey-Eaton, TA vs Von Raschke, Blanchard vs Valiant and Zbyszko vs Bockwinkel. Most recent show on 12/30 drew around 8,000 (\$70,000) for Roadies vs Freebirds and Flair vs Garvin. . . Billy Haynes was originally to win the TV title tourney, but you know the story.

AWA: Hansen vs Sarge and Roadies vs Nord-Stomper didn't draw well in St. Paul, however 1/10 Chicago drew more than 10,000 for Hansen vs Sarge and Roadies & Blackwell vs Freebirds in a cage. . . Martel hasn't made any dates since losing the title. They are crediting Martel's injuring his back on 12/25 St. Paul vs Hansen to why he submitted four days later at the Meadowlands in the title bout. . . Garvin & Regal set to lose the tag straps soon--probably to Curt Hennig & Scott Hall. Gagne, Inc. wants to push Hall into a Hogan-type, but know he's one year away so Curt's job is to protect him and cover for him until he can work for himself. . . ESPN renewal contract with AWA through end of 1987.

World Class: Freebirds won the 6 man title from Kerry & Kevin Von Erich & Brian Adisas on 1/3 in Dallas before the biggest Sportatorium crowd in a long time--which I guess means between 3,000 and 4,000. . . Buddy Roberts also downed Mark Youngblood for the TV strap 1/6 in Fort Worth. . . Austin Idol in as a heel. . . Gino Hernandez and Chris Adams did their split on 1/6. I haven't seen it yet but know Chris is the babyface. . . Official gate from 12/25 Reunion Arena was \$97,914 which translates to 7,480 paid. I've seen a lot of the card but not Freebirds vs Von Erichs or Brody vs Gang chain match. Kevin & Kerry vs Gino & Chris was a 20:00 waltz, with Gino refusing to tag in at the end, Chris tossing Kevin over the top to get a DQ and them having words afterwards. Gino & Chris held the tag belts, so apparently they're held up or forgotten. . . 1/27 Fort Worth is the next Star Wars with Brody vs Gang in a cage chain match, plus Gino vs Chris and Freebirds defending the 6-man against Brody-Kerry-Lance. Kevin is in Japan that night, so he'll be injured, probably 1/17 Dallas when he wrestles Hayes in a single. . . They're determined to push Freebirds vs Von Erichs for the entire 1986 season. I believe Hayes is either booker or assistant booker. . . Sunshine is managing Missing Link who wrestles Rude for the American strap on the 1/27 show. . . Fujinami's 12/25 bout with The Roman lost bout on card. Dicks Williams so so
Japanese girls: Dump Matsumoto will appear on the WWF tour with the Crush Girls, thereby making it interesting. Now Dump can't really wrestle, therefore

1985 IN REVIEW

FAVORITE LINES OF 1985

"During the holidays, I heard a toy expert rating dolls and the John Studd wrestling doll came up. She said that the doll wasn't flexible and did none of the things advertised. How much more realistic can you get?"

Mike Rodgers

"I've heard the Rolls Royce that the WWF is giving away (before the 11/7 Wrestling Classic in Chicago) will be a Hogan model. In other words, it runs out of gas every five minutes."

Bob Closson in Mat Results

GONG MAGAZINES TOP 10 STORIES OF 1985

- 1) Bruiser Brody jumping from Giant Baba to Antonio Inoki's group in late March
- 2) The UWF wrestlers agreeing to work for New Japan next year in December
- 3) The formation and first presentation of new cards by Naoki Otsuka's "Riki Productions" company
- 4) Giant Baba getting wrestling on prime time
- 5) Antonio Inoki beating Hulk Hogan to capture the IWGP tournament
- 6) The Ric Flair vs. Rick Martel match, the first double World title match ever in Japan on October 21 in Tokyo
- 7) Tatsumi Fujinami scoring a pin on Antonio Inoki in the finals of the IWGP tag tournament on December 12 giving Fujinami and Kengo Kimura the championship
- 8) Super Strong Machine, Shunji Takano and Hiro Saito's jump from Inoki's group to Riki Productions
- 9) The retirement of Satoru Sayama
- 10) The Road Warriors Japanese debut on March 8

WEEKLY PRC WRESTLING TOP 10 STORIES

- 1) The return of the UWF wrestlers to Inoki's New Japan promotion
- 2) Brody's jumping from Baba to Inoki
- 3) The match of the year: Inoki vs. Fujinami on Sept. 19
- 4) The Flair vs. Martel match
- 5) Road Warriors Japanese debut
- 6) Riki Choshu's All Japan debut and beginnings of his feud with Genichiro Tenryu
- 7) The first Inoki vs. Brody match on April 18
- 8) The Tsuruta vs. Choshu match on November 4
- 9) The Fujinami vs. Super Strong Machine match on May 17
- 10) Baba's promotion getting on prime time television

MY PICKS FOR BEST MATCHES, BY MONTHS IN 1985

December 1984

- 1) Kazuo Yamazaki vs. Nobuhiko Takada under UWF rules 12-5 Tokyo (UWF)
- 2) Funks vs. Stan Hansen & Bruiser Brody 12-9 Nagoya (AJPW)
- 3) Ric Flair vs. Kerry Von Erich 12-2 Oklahoma City (Mid-South)

January 1985

- 1) Ric Flair vs. Kerry Von Erich 1-25 St. Louis (Central States)
- 2) Riki Choshu & Animal Hamaguchi vs. Genichiro Tenryu & Motoshi Okuma 1-4 Tokyo (AJPW)
- 3) Jim Duggan vs. Ted DiBiase 1-18 Houston (Mid South)

February 1985

- 1) Ric Flair vs. Harley Race 2-24 Meadowlands (AWA/NWA)
- 2) Tiger Mask vs. Kuniaki Kobayashi 2-5 Sapporo (AJPW)
- 3) Ricky Morton & Robert Gibson vs. Chavo & Hector Guerrero 2-13 Shreveport Mid South TV tapes

March 1985

- 1) Ted DiBiase vs. Jim Duggan Tuxedo Street Fight 3-22 Houston (Mid South)
- 2) Tiger Mask vs. Kuniaki Kobayashi 3-9 Tokyo (AJPW)
- 3) Ted DiBiase vs. Jim Duggan no DQ match 3-8 Houston (Mid South)

April 1985

- 1) Lioness Asuka vs. Chigusa Nagayo 4-7 Tokyo (Japanese girls)
- 2) Keiichi Yamada vs. Shunji Kosugi 4-19 Tokyo (NJPW)
- 3) Antonio Inoki vs. Bruiser Brody 4-19 Tokyo (NJPW)

May 1985

- 1) Dennis Condrey & Bobby Eaton vs. Tommy Rogers & Bobby Fulton 5-5 Texas Stadium (World Class)
- 2) Dynamite Kid & Davey Boy Smith & Ben Bassarab vs. Kuniaki Kobayashi & Yoshiaki Yatsu & Norio Honaga 5-13 (AJPW)
- 3) Ric Flair vs. Kevin Von Erich 5-5 Texas Stadium (World Class)

June 1985

- 1) Tiger Mask vs. Kuniaki Kobayashi 6-21 Tokyo (AJPW)
- 2) Ric Flair vs. Terry Taylor 6-1 New Orleans Superdome (Mid South)
- 3) Riki Choshu & Animal Hamaguchi vs. Dynamite Kid & Davey Boy Smith 6-1 (AJPW)

July 1985

- 1) Riki Choshu & Animal Hamaguchi & Yoshiaki Yatsu vs. Jumbo Tsuruta & Genichiro Tenryu & Motoshi Okuma 7-13 Tokyo (AJPW)
- 2) Terry Taylor vs. Ted DiBiase 7-10 Mid South TV tapes in Shreveport
- 3) Kevin & Kerry Von Erich vs. Gino Hernandez & Chris Adams 7-4 Bart Worth

August 1985

- 1) Jaguar Yokota vs. Lioness Asuka 8-22 Tokyo (Japanese girls)
- 2) Fabulous Ones vs. Shepherders 8-12 Explosive match (Memphis)
- 3) Antonio Inoki vs. Bruiser Brody 8-1 Tokyo (NJPW)

September 1985

- 1) Keiji Mutoh & The Cobra & Kenso Kimura vs. Kantaro Hoshino & Shunji Kosugi & Shinya Hashimoto 9-13 (NJPW)
- 2) Road Warriors vs. Terry Gordy & Michael Hayes 9-28 Chicago (AWA)
- 3) Rick Martel vs. Jumbo Tsuruta 9-28

October 1985

- 1) Ric Flair vs. Rick Martel 10-21 Tokyo (AJPW)
- 2) Ric Flair vs. Butch Reed 10-27 Oklahoma City (Mid South)
- 3) Road Warriors vs. Riki Choshu & Yoshiaki Yatsu 10-22 Osaka (AJPW)

November 1985

- 1) Jim Duggan vs. Buzz Sawyer 11-11 New Orleans (Mid South)
- 2) Magnum T.A. vs. Tully Blanchard 11-28 Greensboro (Crockett) I Quit match
- 3) Randy Savage vs. Ricky Steamboat 11-7 Chicago "Wrestling Classic" (WWF)

MR. MIKE'S YEAR IN REVIEW

It's hard to imagine that we're back here again, trying to recap another year of pro 'rasslin, but we are. It's been an extraordinary year. Rotten, but extraordinary.

The systematic self-destruction of our favorite hybrid sport made great gains this year. The decline itself is no surprise, but one year ago, I didn't foresee such a rapid decline.

From our usual perspective as AWA hometown watchers, it's been both disheartening and discouraging.

The outlook in January was the best since the wrestling war began at the end of 1983. Bruiser Brody was still on hand. The AWA was in the midst of their biggest signing coup: The arrival of Sgt. Bobby Remus Slaughter away from the WWF. Our boys were expansion-minded, albeit self-defensively with the Pro Wrestling USA show by now almost entirely AWA and Gagne-run. The AWA-NWA cooperation remained largely theoretical and the only evidence was verbally.

But things weren't as bright as they seemed. Brody saw his last AWA show on 1/13 in St. Paul. As for that great American military hero and all-around merchandising mecca Sgt. Slaughter, well just check out the "Most Washed Up" poll category. Still, in the Twin Cities and largely throughout most of the AWA, things stayed strong through April for those spring-time cage matches we've grown accustomed to, plus the umpteenth unretirement of Verne Gagne. This momentum burned itself out. Inexplicably in May and June the crowds disappeared.

Sure, you can acknowledge "Summer is an off-time" or "It takes a while for new faces to get established," but what it really comes down to is it takes a while for the fans to wake up to continued boring promoting. The major external force (as opposed to the traditional internal incompetence) can be summed up in one word: WRESTLEMANIA.

I think the biggest surprise of 1985 is just how splendidly the WWF's marketing schemes worked out. The attempt of Wrestlemania was unlikely and the results were unbelievable.

We fans used to sit back and bemoan how the legit media used to give no coverage to wrestling. Wouldn't it be great to have regular coverage in the Radio, TV and Papers?

Shouldn't the media at least acknowledge the existence of wrestling as a large, thriving business? Can't we have a little respect?

Against this unseemly state, Vince McMahon got national exposure, network TV and cross-marketing merchandising of unparalleled proportions.

If Wrestlemania itself didn't make a ton of money due to considerable downside risk, the resulting upside made it as good as gold. Wrestling is taken seriously now, boys and girls, by the marketing, advertising and money men around the country. While some other promoters have benefitted a little, it's been largely a one-way street for Vince.

So where does that leave us, we ancretin types who like wrestling for, among other things, actual wrestling skill, work-rate and ability?

Pretty bad off seems to be the answer. Has true ability, skill and experience ever meant less?

With all the steroid-bloated pre-cancerous behemoths running rampant, we have our answer.

Things don't look any better for the future.

Two trends resulting from this promotional upheaval suggest themselves.

First, the bodybuilder with no ability that is put over almost immediately; and two, the decreasing rate of talent turnover.

In the present competitive environment (More resembling pagan bloodlust) the legal written contract has taken new-found importance. If you wanna keep 'em, ya' better sign 'em up, cause otherwise they ain't gonna' be there after you've hyped em.

The WWF ploy (sound business practice in the real world) of signing their talent to long-term deals made for almost a one-way talent flow. In self-defense, Crockett, Gagne and the others are signing their talent as well. While some small talent exchanges are possible, the undeniable result is a diminished, diluted and stagnant talent pool.

As we sit here and reflect on the disappointment of the year that was, we realize we'll be lucky if 1986 is just more of the same.

Someday, many still seem to agree, the WWF bubble will burst. If this is the year, I can't wait for the press coverage. "Wrestling, the all-along sham that it is, is dying, a victim of its own excesses, stupidity, contempt for its audience and (shudder) poor marketing."

Our sixth annual awards will be next, with points (designated on a 5-3-2 basis for firsts, seconds and third place votes from the approximately 140 ballots cast), plus comments afterward from myself, Mr. Mike, Bob Closson (Mat Results editor) and Steve Luther (former editor Wrestling Chronicle).

WRESTLER OF THE YEAR

1. RIC FLAIR (95).....523
 2. Riki Choshu (11).....207
 3. Roddy Piper (10).....129
 4. Hulk Hogan (7).....113
 5. Bruiser Brody (2).....86
- Honorable Mentions: Ted DiBiase 54,
Stan Hansen 41, Dynamite Kid 40

Mr. Mike: This considers the entire package, both in and out of the ring in both ring performance and impact. We'll stick with Ric Flair as No. 1.

All the reasons for his winning in the past still go: for ability, work-rate, image projection, travel, etc. he's still the best. Even the all-pervading, putrid, hubristic homunculus Dusty Rhodes can't ruin Flair, though he comes distressingly close at times. Best of all, Ric didn't have to lose the belt once this year. It's harder to find other worthy contenders. WWF guys like Hogan and Piper fall down when he consider work-rate, skill (Hogan) and imagination (both seem guilty to me). This year has been a disaster for Bruiser Brody, but we'll slip him in the top three. His move to Inoki's New Japan was dramatic and something of a life-saver for that devastated group, even if it was for naught. In the AWA, I did consider Rick Martel who in the ring is a very worthy champ, but on the mike, and more importantly, at the gate, Rick is no Ric. Other Americans to consider included Ted DiBiase, Chris Adams, maybe Terry Funk or Randy Savage, but nah. In Japan, Riki Choshu and Satoru Sayama again had great impact. For that matter, Inoki himself had his usual impact on the business, but it still survived. 1. Flair; 2. Choshu; 3. Brody

Dave Meltzer: "Early in the year I thought this was destined to go to Piper, for his selling of Wrestlemania. However, Piper bores me now, and it's impossible for me to list a guy first who doesn't put out great matches in the ring. Flair became the obvious choice to me, particularly toward the end of the year when he personally transformed the WTBS show from something I'd avoid at all costs to something I try hard not to miss. More importantly, Flair continues to be the best and most complete wrestler when you consider the entire package--ability, work-rate, believable persona, great matches, drawing power and as the year finished up, his one fault, unimaginative interviews, was corrected and for the last three months of the year, I'd rate him No. 1 on the mic. Choshu was an easy second. Changing the entire style of work of a promotion, balance of power in a promotion war and having probably as many great matches during the year as anyone in the business would have made him a strong choice for No. 1 had there been no Flair. Third, based solely on the first six months of the year, goes to Piper. By all rights, Hogan should be listed as well, because nobody made a greater impact, but I refuse to ever list a poor wrestler as a candidate for this. Bob Closson: Flair continues to be

somebody that always performs at 100 percent. The man is truly dedicated to wrestling and has logged more time in the ring than anyone else this past year. If Flair were to lose, Ted DiBiase would be his most logical replacement, even though politics wouldn't allow this to happen. After DiBiase, I pick Dynamite Kid third. His talent is smothered in the WWF but he's still great.

- 1980 - Harley Race
1981 - Ric Flair
1982 - Ric Flair
1983 - Ric Flair
1984 - Ric Flair
1985 - Ric Flair

BEST BABY FACE

1. HULK HOGAN (88).....445
 2. Kerry Von Erich (13).....277
 3. Jim Duggan (14).....184
 4. Riki Choshu (5).....115
 5. Road Warriors (1).....83
- Honorable Mention: Jerry Lawler 47

Mr. Mike: Since we're concerned with appearance, ability to arouse heat and general fan reaction, not ability, Hulk Hogan is No. 1. To my dismay, all the hype about his "Q rating" (recognizability to the public-at-large) seems well-founded. Wrestlemania, Sports Illustrated, the cartoon show, etc. all led to the WWF's excellent second half of 1985 at the gate. The incredible marketing income, which is really the name of the game, has focused around Hogan. "Hulkamania" is pretty burned out in the Twin Cities, but not-so elsewhere, but it will be. But give them credit, through Hogan, the "rock'n'wrestling fan" (ie the non-traditional fan--last year's big lie, this year's self-fulfilling media prophecy and next year's nostalgia) has come out. Beyond Hulk, I also give a lot of credit to Paul Orndorff. He seems to have a lot of charisma and I've been impressed with his heat at live shows either as a babyface or heel. His performance is only routine, but the reaction exceeds it. Outside the circus, the Road Warriors became "official" babyfaces without a formal turn. Even though they haven't drawn great in the AWA's (Abysmal Wrestling Attendance) summer and fall, just think what the gates would have been without them. Without the Roadies it would have been the Au Revoir Wrestling Association.

Other key candidates are Dusty in the Mid Atlantic (self-induced and completely reprehensible), Jim Duggan in Mid South, Choshu in Japan, who has great charisma. Being given no consideration are the stale, chemically-saturated Von Erichs in Texas. Their gate impotence has been more pronounced than ever as the year wore on.

1. Hogan; 2. Road Warriors; 3. Duggan

DM: Without question, now more than ever, Hulk Hogan is the No. 1 box office commodity in the business and its most popular soul. Even under the most trying of circumstances, the Road

Warriors have established themselves as top-level babyfaces. Others I considered were both Inoki and Fujinami in New Japan (from a pure wrestling aspect, I'd pick Fujinami #1), Choshu in All Japan and Lane & Keirn in Memphis. However, my second place pick is based on personal favoritism and the fact the guy isn't one-dimensional like the Roadies and the WWF guys--and that's Jim Duggan in Mid South. I got a kick out of him going after and beating the guys who smashed his car, smashed his eye and then smashed his girlfriend. No. 3 in my mind, because of the heat they generate and how they've picked up crowds in the Carolinas is the Rock 'n' Roll Express. The bouts I've seen them live in, the crowd, from start to finish, goes crazy whereas others just get ~~haat~~ heat in a few patented spots. I didn't even consider the Von Erichs, because even though Kerry Von Erich has more national marketing potential than anyone except possibly Hogan, fans in Texas are bored by them. Check out the crowds if you don't believe me. A baby face of the year doesn't bore his fans. Dusty turns off to many for me to consider him. I saw Lawler live, and even though I respect him as a multi-dimensional character, the crowd reaction for him at home doesn't match up to the reaction of the guys I listed ahead of him. When push comes to shove, I consider Choshu as more a charisma-boy than a babyface, since he's often a heel-type tho it doesn't really matter in Japan. BC: Hogan unfortunately represents wrestling in the eyes of the media and the celebrities, which I guess shows you how much faith we should put into most of their integrity. Kerry Von Erich is the most popular in Texas and up there anywhere World Class is on TV. I picked Choshu third, even though he isn't really a babyface, but he is the most popular wrestler in Japan. He deserved a mention for being the key to All Japan's beating New Japan in 1985.

- 1980 - Dusty Rhodes
- 1981 - Tommy Rich
- 1982 - Hulk Hogan
- 1983 - Hulk Hogan
- 1984 - Hulk Hogan
- 1985 - Hulk Hogan

BEST HEEL

- 1. RODDY PIPER (86).....483
 - 2. Ted DiBiase (11).....185
 - 3. Michael Hayes (2).....161
 - 4. Stan Hansen (5).....103
 - 5. Ric Flair (11).....99
- Honorable Mention: Tully Blanchard 59,
Terry Funk 45, Chris Adams 40, Randy Savage 31

LM: For the second year running, Roddy Piper stands alone in importance and impact. He's virtually as indispensable to the WWF as Hulk Hogan. He's got the perfect comic book style villainry which works so well and bores me to death. His financial clout in the WWF is practically the same as Hogan's--a situation he fought for and won. The AWA hasn't been well-heelled this year, although Stan Hansen came on strong at year's end. Having now won the title gives him an interesting start to 1986.

Ted DiBiase has been tremendous all year and is easily the best in the ring of any heel. Now that he's turned, we'll keep a baby-face eye on him in '86. Besides Piper, the best in the WWF, at least to me, has been Savage, who may be their best worker, and Funk, who is tremendous fun to watch. If we have to buy Ric Flair as a heel, then he's great and he qualifies. Due to Rhodes, Flair was a little schizoid as NWA champs often must be, but he seems to have trouble getting negative heat. Even though Chris Adams also retained a lot of popularity in Texas, he was the only bright spot there, and he's a good worker to boot. 1. Piper; 2. DiBiase; 3. Adams

DM: Unlike with a babyface, who can just stand there and if he's charismatic enough, he can get by--to me, a heel has to work at it. Roddy Piper had the most exposure, and based on Wrestlemania, it does carry him to the No. 1 spot in my book, but only because of Flair's role confusion. Right now, I'd pick Flair No. 1 with nobody close for second. Others I considered were Blanchard (who is at least growing on me, but I still feel he lacks the presence to be at the top here unlike DiBiase who makes me stop what I'm doing when he's on); Hayes (one of the best I've ever seen, but largely wasted this year); Nikita Koloff (just too limited a role to consider seriously, but he was hot in the summer); Funk (who at the arena itself is probably the best at working a crowd) and Buzz Sawyer (if he keeps his current pace up, will surely be in the top three next year). Based on the year I went with Piper, DiBiase and then Flair.

BC: If there's a terrible deed going on in the WWF, chances are Piper is involved. He is still able to give a good heel interview. I went with Hayes second because of his work in Florida, AWA, Memphis and now Texas. He's also someone I always pay attention to on interviews. I picked Zbyszko third because he's so obnoxious that I believe that's his real personality. Steve Luther: DiBiase is just fantastic in my book and, like Duggan, has great role versatility. Flair's recent action gives him a No. 3 nod, behind Hayes. Piper is boring to me. He never does anything creative and his rambling interviews don't make him a top-notch heel in my book. Dick Slater has been very good in Mid South.

- 1980 - Larry Zbyszko
- 1981 - Don Muraco
- 1982 - Buzz Sawyer
- 1983 - Michael Hayes
- 1984 - Roddy Piper
- 1985 - Roddy Piper

FEUD OF THE YEAR

1. DUGGAN VS. DIBIASE (35).....287
 2. Tiger Mask vs. Kobayashi (25).....227
 3. Choshu vs. Tenryu (5).....171
 4. Hogan vs. Piper (15).....107
 5. Blanchard vs. TA (3).....71
- Honorable Mention: Flair vs. TA 60,
 Fabulous Ones vs. Sheepherders 49,
 Road Warriors vs. Freebirds 49, Piper
 vs. Orndorff 41, Flair vs. Rhodes 41

DM: In considering hype, gate appeal, match quality and my diminishing attention span to actually watching, this is tougher than last. Automatics like Rich vs. Sawyer and Freebirds vs. Von Erichs in years past aren't there. Hogan vs. Piper doesn't cut it, though Lord knows they've done a great job hyping it. Piper feuds with everyone, and besides, the matches usually suck except for 2-4 good minutes. The WWF has its problems with angles anyway, specifically the beginnings, middles and ends. Plus that one sprung from the rock'n'wrestling thing, which I hate. My top choice is DiBiase vs. Duggan, they had great matches, great build-up, classic and traditional and a real clear-cut conclusive ending. The Sheepherders vs. Fabulous Ones met weekly for what seemed like months (because it was) and though it got stale, they provided unbelievable action several times per week. Because I got to see it live, it will live on in memory. Choshu vs. Tenryu gets the token Japanese nod. The heat and matches were good, and it was enjoyable watching Tenryu come into his own. Tiger Mask vs. Kobayashi was good, but Mask's injuries slowed them down. Inoki vs. Brody had its personality-induced limitations. Back to the U.S., I refuse to recognize Flair vs. Rhodes. Koloffs vs. Rock'n'Roll Express just didn't work for me. Roadies vs. Freebirds didn't jell, although they tried. 1. Duggan vs. DiBiase; 2. Choshu vs. Tenryu; 3. Sheeps vs. Fabs

DM: Even though there was no angle to it, the matches between Tiger Mask and Kuniaki Kobayashi were all so good that I listed it first. I had a hard time distinguishing between great feuds from an angle standpoint (Hogan vs. Piper, Duggan-Watts vs. Akbar's army, Flair vs. Rhodes) and those that worked the best in the ring but no angle to real major heat was involved (Guerreros vs. Rock'n'Roll Express, Midnight Express vs. Fantastics and to a different extent, Inoki vs. Brody and Choshu vs. Tenryu). What I saw of Duggan vs. Sawyer and even more so, Duggan vs. DiBiase, I loved. Even though neither of them is my favorite performer, my third nod goes to Blanchard vs. TA who had great matches, good angles and lots of heat. I went with Duggan vs. DiBiase second. I also loved Lawler vs. Dundee.

EC: I went with Fabs vs. Sheepherders first even though it lasted a month too long, but the bouts were usually wild and exciting. TA and Blanchard is a close second. I don't think there matches were very short and most people seemed to rate their bouts as the best match on the card. Duggan vs. Sawyer just at the end of the year.

Buzz feud with Tommy Rich and Dick Murdoch, I know it'll be great. The Von Erichs vs. Hernandez & Adams seemed boring and one-sided. It was so long and overdone it made Fabs vs. Sheeps seem like a one-weeker. Brody and Inoki's egos damaged their feud. Steamboat vs. Muraco is the best feud in the WWF, but their feuds don't go as fast as they do in Mid South and things are very repetitive.

SL: I only picked feuds which had excellent matches and things were kept fresh. DiBiase vs. Duggan was the best in many years in the U.S. from the interviews, angles and those fantastic matches. The feud also had a climactic and absolute finish with those cage matches. Tiger Mask vs. Kobayashi is second with Choshu vs. Tenryu third. Duggan vs. Sawyer has been tremendous so far. I also liked Sunshine vs. Jim Cornette. It was a lot of fun and they kept it short.

- 1980 - Sammartino vs. Zbyszko
- 1981 - Andre vs. Killer Khan
- 1982 - DiBiase vs. Junkyard Dog
- 1983 - Freebirds vs. Von Erichs
- 1984 - Freebirds vs. Von Erichs
- 1985 - DiBiase vs. Duggan

TAG TEAM OF THE YEAR

1. THE BRITISH BULLDOGS (42).....356
 2. Midnight Express (36).....315
 3. Road Warriors (31).....189
 4. Choshu & Yatsu (7).....115
 5. DiBiase & Williams (5).....111
- Honorable Mention: Terry Gordy & Michael Hayes 52, Ricky Morton & Robert Gibson 42

DM: Even though the Road Warriors' opponents were poor and their drawing appeared spotty, they're too good and too important to ignore. The way they crossed over to the NWA while still AWA champs was amazing. They also made a big hit in Japan, where ability counts for more so I recognize an improvement. The British Bulldogs haven't begun to approach their potential in the WWF, but still look good. They haven't been buried as we earlier feared. Mid Atlantic has lots of teams, with Midnight Express the best, but they've been the ones pushed aside. I didn't see enough Japan like Choshu & Tenryu and it was a bad year for the Von Erichs and Freebirds plus it was the break-up year of Brody & Hansen (politics), Strong Machines (injuries) and Adonis & Murdoch (natural causes). I went with Road Warriors; 2. Midnight; 3. Choshu & Yatsu

DM: The best team in pro wrestling right now is the Midnight Express. I picked them second, because no matter what people say about Kid & Smith, they are better in the WWF than Midnight was in Texas. Kid & Smith are also better in Japan than Midnight is in the Carolinas, although not by much. However I'm sure if things continue like this, Midnight will be a solid No. 1 next year. For third, I had four candidates: Choshu & Hamaguchi (forget who they're pushing as Choshu's partner, this is the real team); Morton & Gibson (impact, drawing power and great work rate); DiBiase & Williams (great work

and maybe the most believable because of Williams) and of course the Roadies, who showed great improvement this year. I ended up going with Choshu & Hamaguchi mainly because they show the best teamwork and were involved in a higher percentage of great matches than any team I saw in '85.

BC: It's hard to believe how much the Midnight Express has improved since leaving Dallas. They've proven to be the best tag team in wrestling, and even this while being ignored for main events. Bobby Eaton may not get the respect he deserves, but he's as good a wrestler as any of them. I picked Dynamite Kid & Davey Boy Smith second and Ted DiBiase & Steve Williams third. SL: I went with Midnight Express first followed by Choshu & Yatsu (who are just as good with Hamaguchi); and the British Bulldogs. The Bulldogs haven't shown as much as they should this year, and Smith has really slipped a lot, but their Japan bouts along should put them in the top three. I also considered DiBiase & Williams, DiBiase & Hansen and Slater & Sawyer.

1980 - Terry Gordy & Buddy Roberts
1981 - Terry Gordy & Jimmy Snuka
1982 - Ole Anderson & Stan Hansen
1983 - Ricky Steamboat & Jay Youngblood
1984 - Road Warriors
1985 - Dynamite Kid & Davey Boy Smith

MOST IMPROVED

1. STEVE "DR. DEATH" WILLIAMS (39).....298
2. Genichiro Tenryu (34).....205
3. Road Warrior Animal (8).....135
4. Tiger Mask (15).....123
5. Kuniaki Kobayashi (9).....69
Honorable Mention: Road Warrior Hawk 66, Dale Veasy 40, Tommy Rogers 36, Toshiaki Kawada 30, Jake Roberts 30

MM: This is a tough one because I didn't see enough overall to judge. I'm also unfamiliar with the Japs many are considering. As 1985 began, I was overwhelmed with Tiger Mask, and I picked him first based on last spring. Road Warrior Animal gets second, even ahead of partner Hawk (who looked to have a lot more potential last year). He's getting better, getting good effect from showing his awesome strength. He still won't sell too often, but overall his (their) matches are better this year. I went with Steve Williams, who has great credentials third. He's greatly improved in the pro style, a case of not necessarily learning, but adapting.

DL: This category was tough for me as well. In first place I went with Tenryu, who I thought based on the early 80s would forever be etched in my mind as an over-promoted type. He had gotten very good by the end of '84, but thanks to working with Choshu, is now great. I went with Bobby Eaton second even though he's been great for years, now he's showing so many new moves that he's, based on what he shows in the ring, the equal of anyone. Third I went with Dale Veasy, a nobody who really impressed me in San Antonio until Chavo and the like slowed him down for showing everyone up. When you are showing up

Chavo Guerrero, you must be good. I don't consider rookies here because newcomers should improve. Chris Adams seemed a good choice based on his work the first three months of the year, but he's gotten pretty bad lately. Williams is a good choice, it's just that I thought he was already getting good in late '84 and I picked him there, and he hasn't improved THAT much. Buddy Landel also shows a lot more. Jack Hart is another good candidate. BC: Kuniaki Kobayashi is somebody I always look forward to seeing. The Cobra used to be my favorite of the Japanese jr. heavyweights, but I think I enjoy Kobayashi more now. He could be the third best of all the Japanese (behind only Choshu and Fujinami). I can't believe Steve Williams is the same wrestler I saw in 1984. What a drastic change. I picked Toshiaki Kawada third. Hopefully he won't forget what he learned in Japan while in the U.S.

SL: Tenryu is my unquestioned No. 1. Williams is no. 2, going from a stiff to a very skilled and well coordinated wrestler. I picked Tommy Rogers third because he went from an MTV ripoff to a well-executing hard-working type with the ability to make a tag team with the lesser-skilled Bobby Fulton look good.

1980 - Larry Zbyszko
1981 - Adrian Adonis
1982 - Jim Duggan
1983 - Curt Hennig
1984 - The Cobra
1985 - Steve "Dr. Death" Williams

MOST IMPRESSIVE

1. DYNAMITE KID (52).....390
2. Tiger Mask (35).....266
3. Ric Flair (29).....247
4. Ted DiBiase.....83
5. Randy Savage.....59
Honorable Mention: Bobby Eaton 33, Kuniaki Kobayashi 31

MM: Superplexes, head-butts, snap suplexes, leaps, dives, hard brawling, etc., Dynamite Kid always impresses. Ric Flair as the complete package was his usual incredible self. Ability and Charisma, all too rare. Randy Savage is pretty impressive. His leaps outside the ring are wild. He's crazy. He single-handedly made the 11/7 Wrestling Classic a near-winner. Tiger Mask, who I picked No. 2 was a near-phenom early in the year. Others like Brody, Cobra and Chavo Guerrero had off years, so 1. Kid; 2. Tiger Mask; 3. Flair.

DL: I went with Ric Flair first because night-after-night, nobody has as good matches. His moves aren't impressive, at least not compared to a guy like Dynamite Kid, but his work is far more impressive. I went with Tiger Mask second and Ted DiBiase slightly over Dynamite for third. I also considered Randy Savage (when he wants to be, he's about the best, but he rarely wants to be), Bobby Eaton (plagued by poor opponents) and Tatsumi Fujinami.

BC: Tiger Mask sometimes works too

hard and hurts himself. Actually, picking up where Satoru Sayama left off and not ruining the name of Tiger Mask is impressive all by itself. He leaves one with their mouth wide open more than anyone else. Ric Flair is second with Dynamite Kid third. SL: Tiger Mask first and Dynamite Kid second leave little explanation. I picked Ted DiBiase third. He's such a damn good wrestler and in particular during the last six months. He never misses a move, hides opponents mistakes and makes both his foes and partners look very good. His ability has made him more impressive than any U.S. grappler in a long time. Flair is always impressive, but his repertoire is basically the same every night, so DiBiase is more deserving.

1980 - Ken Patera
1981 - Don Muraco
1982 - Tiger Mask (Satoru Sayama)
1983 - Dynamite Kid
1984 - Dynamite Kid
1985 - Dynamite Kid

MOST WASHED UP

1. SGT. SLAUGHTER (47).....343
2. Adrian Adonis (24).....254
3. Kevin Von Erich (11).....87
4. Brian Blair (7).....50
5. Junkyard Dog (6).....43
Honorable Mention: Dusty Rhodes 30,
Jimmy Snuka 30

MM: The biggest single decline this year--Well, maggots, no doubt the dud of the year (decade?) is Sgt. Slaughter. All too unfortunately, within a month ennui was evident. By June, somnambulism and by Thanksgiving, total vacancy. Can Hansen as champ give him more life? It was a disaster for him, considering he was among the top baby-faces in 1984 and a top heel before that, and a good worker most of that time as well. The decline is saddening. Adrian Adonis didn't make an ill-advised career choice, except emulating Jerry Blackwell. While he's still better than many, he's limited by his lassitude and only echoes his former self. Third I went with Blackwell himself. He's slowed down greatly this past year. His ability, well-regarded considering his size, is gone. Age and obesity have caught up. He's admittedly unable to catch his breath and his worthless past 4-5 minutes. He can't do much before that either. He's still going over well in the AWA, but the latest chapter of his boring feud with Sheik Kaisey could end that.

DM: Sgt. Slaughter and Adrian Adonis stand out as the top two. Those under consideration for the third spot were The Von Erichs, Gino Hernandez and Chris Adams (the latter the saddest since he improved so greatly toward the end of '84)--I think Kevin and Gino are the strongest candidates there; Bob Orton in the WWF, the once greatest wrestler in this profession who, considering workrate, is way below average; Paul Orndorff, who does nothing but punch for 5:00 and based

on his lack of work in Dallas--Bruiser Brody. When all is said and done, I have to pick Gino, who is even worse than Kevin.

BC: I picked Adonis, who may soon be changing clothes with Uncle Elmer. Second is Slaughter, who still believes people care about his patriotic garbage. Orton can still wrestle, but hardly does anything anymore.

SL: Slaughter, followed by Adonis and Orton

1980 - Baron Scicluna
1981 - Peter Maivia
1982 - Billy Graham
1983 - Jay Strongbow
1984 - Jimmy Snuka
1985 - Sgt. Slaughter

MOST OBNOXIOUS PERSONALITY

1. VINCE MCMAHON JR. (37).....327
2. Gorilla "Gino" Monsoon (41).....269
3. Gene Okerlund (25).....221
4. Dusty Rhodes (7).....83
5. Hulk Hogan (7).....77
Honorable Mention: Bill Apter 69,
David Crockett 49, Ken Resnick 30

MM: The pickings are rich here. I basically ignore the mildly nauseating and therefore miss some gems. Former top candidates like Gordon Solie and Ole Anderson (as a promoter, of course) are history. I never came close to watching Rufus Jones this year. I found to be the most vile, obnoxious, overbearing, inflated, insufferable, self-important, transparent, redundant --without further ado--Gorilla Monsoon. "Yes folks, this is the mecca...before this capacity crowd...that will give him an attitude adjustment..." Give me a break. Because he's with Jesse Ventura so much, he's been impossible to avoid. Two years ago he was tolerable. After all, he knows what he's talking about when he's not shilling or lying. Trouble is, that's all he does nowadays. Second, and the most obnoxious wrestler, and frankly, he sickens me as much as Monsoon, is Dusty Rhodes, right down to the last roll of flab, stretch mark and blade scar. This failure of humanity is disgusting. Dusty's biggest fan is Virgil Runnels, which is the only reason we, and Ric Flair, have to put up with the Flair vs. Rhodes feud, and some of the most insulting finishes in history, with Starcade '85 being an all-time low. Because this whale has so much power, he severely limits the potential of the NWA circuit, unapparent to most because over-all it's still a great circuit. Banish this booker and I die a happy malcontent. Third is a tie, and a qualified one to boot. I can stomach Vince McMahon and Gene Okerlund very often, I sometimes even like them, but if I see these two cloying goons in that wrestling video one more time, I'll assassinate my TV set.

DM: There are a lot of people who I don't particularly enjoy watching, but those who make me immediately gag are: 1. Hulk Hogan--simply I have only seen him in one match in

the last several months and in that one, he did the impossible, made me hate a bout involving Terry Funk. No matter what I'm doing or where I am, when this oversized idiot is on, I'm gone. Gene Okerlund I went with second. Although I rarely watch the WWF, no matter how little I see, it's too much of this guy who thinks he's the No. 1 act in wrestling. I hate what Vince McMahon has done to wrestling but it doesn't bother me anymore, but his performance in that video reminds me of everything I knew all along. The guy is simply an egomaniac with no equal. Next to the WWF, there are few who make me gag, although Kendall Windham comes close. I don't mind Dusty as a booker, but in the ring, I'd rather see Hogan. Luckily Dusty's out-of-ring persona isn't as obnoxious as Hulk's though it borders on it. Monsoon is terrible, but I just haven't seen enough of him to where it gets to me. Actually Bruno Sammartino gets to me more, because here's a guy who everytime he's away from the mic he complains about how bad the WWF is, and he's the ultimate shill when he's next to McMahon. Seeing this once-proud man shill on that MTV special in February was one of the single saddest sights these OD'd eyes have ever seen. I also have nothing against Bill Apter, but that segment on WTBS he comes across worse than Monsoon and Okerlund put together. It's really a credit to Flair that I never turn it off, tho I always wind up wishing that I had. I can't handle Steve Sacks and Bill Mercer, but there are other candidates for them, or those boring Jonathan Boyd interviews.

SL: What really irritates me about Gorilla Monsoon is when he announces, he thinks he's better than the wrestlers and the referee. "You can't get a three count without hooking the leg, it's stupid to stry." He's so damn pompous. I went with Hogan second and Okerlund third.

1981 - Gene LeBelle
 1982 - David Crockett
 1983 - Vince McMahon, Jr.
 1984 - Vince McMahon, Jr.
 1985 - Vince McMahon, Jr.

BEST ON INTERVIEWS

1. JIMMY CORNETTE (46).....321
 2. Ric Flair (27).....255
 3. Roddy Piper (13).....207
 4. Michael Hayes (19).....153
 5. Cowboy Bill Watts.....101
 Honorable Mention: Jim Duggan 100,
 Larry Zbyszko 48, Jerry Lawler 44,
 Ted DiBiase 43

MM: My favorite this year without question is Larry Zbyszko. He's every bit as excellent behind the mic as he is worthless in the ring. Many gems (re Greg Gagne: "You've got a father-figure complex" Slaughter: "What can you say about a 300 pound man dressed like a shrub" and Wally Karbo: "You've been promoting for 50 years Wally. You'd think you'd have learned English by now." His mixture of sardonic truths are priceless. The other spots are harder. Jimmy Hart, Jesse Ventura and

Bobby Heenan were less original. Flair is saying the same gaga for eight years, but is still good-to-great). His ranking on David Crockett created some gems. I heard Bill Watts the least but heard so much about him I picked him third. Jimmy Cornette, with next to nothing to do or say, still was better than any other manager and gets second.

DM: This year we've got some problems as nobody stands out. Over the past three months Flair is far and away the best. Every line, every interview since October I hear about dozens of times per week on the phone. Nobody else's interviews get repeated with nearly the regularity. I'm glad someone woke up Ric to the fact he at times was redundant, with his presence carrying his interviews early in the year. Piper was great early with Mr. T and Cyndi Lauper, but he's the pits now. Watts did some of the best interviews I saw all year, but I won't pick him on the basis of four or five great ones. Cornette puts more work into his gems but he lacks the presence, at least in my mind, of a Flair or Piper. I went with Michael Hayes second because he's such a sickie, and third with Jim Duggan slightly over Bill Dundee. Duggan is repetitive and hardly comes up with gems, but those hand gestures kill me. He's the only guy who makes me roll on the floor with laughter.

SL: Hayes, Duggan and Cornette.
 BC: Cornette is great with insults and can talk forever without stuttering on a word. Hayes is someone I always pay attention to. Lawler is third.

1981 - Roddy Piper and Lou Albano (tie)
 1982 - Roddy Piper
 1983 - Roddy Piper
 1984 - Jimmy Hart
 1985 - Jimmy Cornette

BEST TECHNICAL WRESTLER

1. TATSUMI FUJINAMI (53).....389
 2. Dynamite Kid (29).....157
 3. Akira Maeda.....109
 4. Yoshiaki Fujiwara (4).....101
 5. Ted DiBiase.....85
 Honorable Mention: Satoru Sayama 46,
 Steve Wright 30

MM: It's difficult to pick three. Sadly, several gifted wrestlers have declined to various degrees. Good technique must be combined with good conditioning. Proficient high spots followed by undeterminable rest do not make an interesting match. I'll go with Fujinami, Fujiwara and Ric Flair in that order.

DM: Fujinami has always been great, but this year he's been more of a standout. For great mat work, I'll pick Fujiwara second. Fujinami, although not the shooter Fujiwara is, gets first for his ability to make his foe look good. I've decided to pick an American third, one who doesn't miss moves and can make the opponent look good--Ted DiBiase, in other words.

BC: Fujinami followed by Maeda and Fujiwara

SL: Fujinami followed by DiBiase and

- 1980 - Bob Backlund
- 1981 - Ted DiBiase
- 1982 - Tiger Mask (Satoru Sayama)
- 1983 - Tiger Mask (Satoru Sayama)
- 1984 - Dynamite Kid (tie)
Masa Saito
- 1985 - Tatsumi Fujinami

BEST BRAWLER

- 1. STAN HANSEN (48).....405
 - 2. Bruiser Brody (60).....384
 - 3. Jim Duggan (12).....145
 - 4. Terry Gordy.....100
 - 5. Terry Funk.....81
- Honorable Mention: Ric Flair 60, Ted DiBiase 48, Dynamite Kid 40

MM: This is also known as the Bruiser Brody award, because nobody does it better. Brody's only problem is where to do it. That myopic monster, Stan Hansen is at the top presently and is an easy No. 2. Third goes to Terry Gordy, who still has more ability than he sometimes shows. I hate to slight Jim Duggan, but...

DM: I picked this on the guys who I've seen involved in the best brawls. Even though Jim Duggan is a far more sloppy in execution brawler than, Brody, his matches this year, particularly with Ted DiBiase and Buzz Sawyer, can't be ignored. Second I went with Dynamite Kid, who despite the hype and everything else, is a brawler in Japan and while he's in Japan he's the best wrestler in the world. I went with Ric Flair third on the basis of his being involved in great wide-open brawls night-after-night.

BC: I went with Hansen, Brody and Gordy in that order, but it's hard to pick any of the three above the other. I love how Gordy tears into anyone who tries to hit him while waiting to be tagged. Brody has been treated like a bum in Portland and Memphis and held back in World Class, but his performance in Japan keeps him at the top.

SL: Brody didn't impress me nearly as much because his only effective usage was against Inoki, which also burned out quickly so I didn't pick him. Hansen is as good as ever, which makes him No. 1. I enjoyed Gordy a lot more this year because he wasn't always facing Von Erichs for No. 3. Jim Duggan is No. 2.

- 1980 - Bruiser Brody
- 1981 - Bruiser Brody
- 1982 - Bruiser Brody
- 1983 - Bruiser Brody
- 1984 - Bruiser Brody
- 1985 - Stan Hansen

MOST CHARISMATIC

- 1. HULK HOGAN (59).....397
 - 2. Riki Choshu (23).....215
 - 3. Road Warriors (14).....206
 - 4. Ric Flair (13).....203
 - 5. Roddy Piper (10).....85
- Honorable Mention: Kerry Von Erich 53

MM: There's nothing promoter contrived about the incredible appeal of Hulk Hogan and the Road Warriors. The fans really did make them into superstars and the promoters sometimes had to play

catch-up on realization. The Hogan babyface character almost got away, but Verne Gagne realized it soon and had the hit of a decade, if not a lifetime. Verne fought the Roadies appeal for as long as he could, too. Still, the WWF missed on Hogan the first go-around, but figured out how to really exploit it once it was established. Riki Choshu, Ric Flair, Bruiser Brody, Dynamite Kid all chariz me. I don't question Kerry Von Erich, Barry Windham, Chris Adams, Roddy Piper and Paul Orndorff's appeal for others. Self-deluded charisma like Dusty Rhodes, Magnum T.A. and Antonio Inoki largely revolt me. The prefabricated Fabs and Rock'n'Roll Express manufactured charisma remains theoretical to me.

1. Hogan; 2. Roadies; 3. Flair

DM: This category seemed easy to me, with Hogan and the Roadies' obvious appeal making them 1-2. I went with Choshu third because he got over without promotional hype and interviews, through nothing but natural charisma. BC: I went with Hogan, Choshu and Kerry Von Erich. All the three have to do is show up in an arena and a screaming mad rush to ringside starts. Hogan deserves an Emmy for the best act by someone pretending to be a pro wrestler.

SL: Hogan, Choshu and the Road Warriors

- 1980 - Ric Flair
- 1981 - Michael Hayes
- 1982 - Dusty Rhodes (tie)
Ric Flair
- 1983 - Ric Flair
- 1984 - Ric Flair
- 1985 - Hulk Hogan

MOST AGILE WRESTLER

- 1. TIGER MASK (73).....447
 - 2. Dynamite Kid (20).....238
 - 3. Satoru Sayama (25).....204
 - 4. Bobby Eaton (5).....110
 - 5. The Cobra.....98
- Honorable Mention: Randy Savage 36

MM: I'm doubtless ignoring deserving Japanese, but I'll go with Tiger Mask, Dynamite Kid and Randy Savage

DM: Without a doubt the wildest and craziest moves I've seen have been by Tiger Mask. I went with Bobby Eaton second and the Dynamite Kid slightly ahead of Cobra for third

SL: I went with Tiger Mask, Dynamite Kid and Bobby Eaton. I think the way Eaton takes bumps is tremendous.

BC: I went with Tiger Mask, Dynamite Kid and Bobby Eaton

- 1981 - Jimmy Snuka
- 1982 - Satoru Sayama
- 1983 - Satoru Sayama
- 1984 - Dynamite Kid
- 1985 - Tiger Mask (Mitsuhara Misawa)

STRONGEST WRESTLER

- 1. ROAD WARRIOR ANIMAL (128).....632
- 2. Butch Reed (4).....214
- 3. Road Warrior Hawk.....207
- 4. Davey Boy Smith.....60
- 5. Tom Magee (4).....23

MM: Forget the credentials, hype and hormone shots. We've never had so many strong-looking wrestlers (Nikita Koloff,

Scott Hall, Lex Luger) and legitimate lifters (Tom Magee, Ted Arcidi) but can they effectively utilize this ability in the ring. Further, can we separate the moronic morass of hype (Hogan, Studd, Volkoff) from reality? Maybe not. But those that impress me are 1. Roadie Animal; 2. Butch Reed; 3. Davey Boy Smith
 DM: Road Warrior Animal has displayed strength ~~more~~ often and more impressively than anyone I've seen this or probably any other year. I went with Roadie Hawk second and Davey Boy Smith third.
 BC: Animal, Hawk and Reed
 SL: Animal, Reed and Hawk

1981 - Tony Atlas
 1982 - Ken Patera
 1983 - Hulk Hogan
 1984 - Butch Reed
 1985 - Road Warrior Animal

MOST OVERRATED

1. HULK HOGAN (87).....513
 2. Dusty Rhodes (19).....196
 3. Junkyard Dog (10).....151
 4. Sgt. Slaughter (1).....85
 5. Andre the Giant (6).....70
 Honorable Mention: Paul Orndorff 62, Road Warriors 38, John Studd 33, Randy Savage 30

MM: This year's record media exploitation with a total misconception of wrestling's realities (and real unrealities) makes this year as great as ever for this. The greatest misperception involves Hulk Hogan. He's terrible, but has anyone in the media stopped long enough to look. Many WWFers similarly qualify (Studd, Andre, Bundy, Junkyard Dog) and elsewhere, once again Dusty Rhodes comes to mind, most reprehensible because he's the one that promotes it. This deluded slug is even more offensive than Hogan, and that's a disturbing notion. The trend of putting over worthless rookies being a disturbing trend, makes two of the most offensive as Ricky Vaughn and Kendall Windham, both following in Mike Von Erich's legendary footsteps.

DM: There are so many you have to pick only the most offensive--Hulk Hogan, Dusty Rhodes and Sgt. Slaughter.
 BC: Hulk Hogan, Sgt. Slaughter and Kevin Von Erich
 SL: Hulk Hogan, Dusty Rhodes and Sgt. Slaughter. Others I considered were Magnum T.A., Terry Taylor, Gino Hernandez, Kendall Windham and Lance Von Erich. The first three are good wrestlers but they came to mind because Magnum is simply one of Dusty's flunkies, Taylor is good, but not good enough to be a lead star or main eventer in Mid South and I'm sick of Gino in main events. I went with three guys who are well established, have been terrible for a long time, and are way overblown as our personal saviors.

1980 - Mr. Wrestling II
 1981 - Pedro Morales
 1982 - Pedro Morales
 1983 - Bob Backlund
 1984 - John Studd
 1985 - Hulk Hogan

MOST UNDERRATED

1. BOBBY EATON (64).....395 x
 2. Brad Armstrong (5).....102
 3. Dale Veasy (4).....77
 4. Hiro Saito.....43
 5. Rick Martel.....37
 Honorable Mention: Animal Hamaguchi 34, Kuniaki Kobayashi 30, Ricky Steamboat 30

MM: Picking worthy candidates requires perception and diligence, two of my diminishing attributes. Avoiding Japanese, I'll go with Eaton, Bret Hart and Brad Armstrong.
 DM: I picked Bobby Eaton first because I think very few people other than readers of this publication truly recognize how great the guy is. I picked Dale Veasy second with Animal Hamaguchi third, although Hiro Saito, Jack Hart and Pat Rose were strongly considered.

BC: Can't Crockett see how good Bobby Eaton is? Can't Calgary see how good Hiro Saito is? Saito never does a thing in Calgary, but in New Japan he's fantastic. Veasy, when given a chance, is very good.
 SK: Bobby Eaton, Brad Armstrong and Pat Rose. Rose could be a top-rate heel if given the chance

1980 - Hossein Arab (Iron Sheik)
 1981 - Buzz Sawyer
 1982 - Adrian Adonis
 1983 - Dynamite Kid
 1984 - Brian Blair
 1985 - Bobby Eaton

BEST CIRCUIT

1. ALL JAPAN (69).....461
 2. Mid South (32).....364
 3. Japanese girls (13).....113
 4. Crockett.....99
 5. New Japan (3).....88
 Honorable Mention: UWF 66, WWF 57, Memphis 38

MM: Perennial favorite Memphis had a pretty spotty year. In this country, the best is easily Mid South. There is absolutely no comparison. Next best is Mid Atlantic, but we're talking a major drop. Baba's overwhelming talent pool makes All Japan No. 1 in the world. Sometimes all that talent works against them. The UWF is another breed, but they're exceptional. As for the rest--this was a terrible year for AWA, World Class and Florida. WWF was much better than 1984, but that's ascribing a nicer smelling brand of shit. The top three of All Japan, UWF and Mid South are a virtual tie, because direct comparisons are impossible.

DM: Because of angles combined with great matches, I went with Mid South first even though All Japan puts on the best live cards. I got so much out of the Mid South TV show this year that I'd rate it first. Third I'll go with the Japanese girls, who are the best workers around. I guess WWF deserves consideration as well, but not from me.
 BC: All Japan, Mid South and Crockett
 SL: I rated Mid South No. 1 because even though All Japan has the best

matches, Watts has tremendous angles and great TV announcing and they combine that into a great TV show and present great matches at the arena as well. Watts uses everyone to their best. I rate UWF third.

1983 - Mid Atlantic
1984 - New Japan
1985 - All Japan

BEST TV SHOW

1. MID SOUTH(79).....500
2. All Japan (33).....351
3. Memphis.....131
4. New Japan.....64
5. Japanese girls.....57

MM: For all the reasons mentioned above and more, Mid South is the best. It has the best action, best angles and a good atmosphere. Memphis does things in a different style, but is similarly good. It's no coincidence that both shows have the best announcers around. I go with All Japan No. 2 behind Mid South because of all the great matches. As for the well-done WWF show from Poughkeepsie. I do like how they do it, just hate what they do.

DM: At a time when my interest in watching wrestling has diminished, All Japan and Mid South tapes still excite me as much as pro wrestling ever has in the past. Mid South is better as a TV show because, besides everything everyone else has said, it's unpredictable. Even during a squash match, an angle could come up. The angles aren't obvious. It's like a good mystery. I picked All Japan second, with all those great matches even if they do end in double count outs. Third was tough for me. I'm getting to enjoy the Japanese girls, Inoki still has good shows and two others come to mind--World Pro Wrestling in Japan and Crockett's World Wide Wrestling show which I think is excellent. Memphis is also very good, but only due to the strong personalities as I don't get into their wrestling except during a real hot feud. I'll pick Crockett's show third.

BC: Mid South, All Japan and Memphis. Mid South is consistent in having an action-packed show each week.

SL: All Japan, Mid South and Memphis. All Japan wins because of it's array of tremendous matches. Memphis provides the best comedy and atmosphere so it's generally a fun show to watch. Besides, they have Lance Russell.

MATCH OF THE YEAR

1. TIGER MASK VS. KUNIAKI KOBAYASHI
6-21 in Tokyo(45).....295
 2. Lioness Asuka vs. Jaguar Yokota
8-22 in Tokyo (27).....175
 3. Ted DiBiase vs. Jim Duggan cage match
3-22 in Houston (14).....160
 4. Ric Flair vs. Kerry Von Erich
1-25 in St. Louis (8).....121
 5. Freebirds vs. Road Warriors
9-28 in Chicago (1).....70
- Honorable Mention: Ric Flair vs. Harley Race 2-24 Meadowlands 68, Roddy Piper &

Paul Orndorff vs. Mr. T & Hulk Hogan
3-31 New York 63, Rick Martel vs.
Jumbo Tsuruta 9-29 St. Paul 40,
Hulk Hogan vs. Roddy Piper 2-18 New
York 35, Fabulous Ones vs. Shepherders
8-12 Memphis 33, Antonio Inoki vs.
Bruiser Brody 8-1 Tokyo 32, Riki
Choshu vs. Genichiro Tenryu 6-21
Tokyo 30

MM: From my limited exposure, the best matches I saw were: 1) Jim Duggan vs. Ted DiBiase 3-22 Houston Tuxedo Street Fight Cage Coal Miners match. The best combination of build-up, delivery and pay-off; 2) Fabulous Ones vs. Shepherders 8-12 Memphis a falls count anywhere in the building match. The most incredible sustained brawling and mayhem. It was exhausting just to watch and highly memorable; 3) Randy Savage vs. Dynamite Kid 11-7 Chicago. I was surprised to see an excellent WWF bout, very short, but excellent, so I picked it. Near misses were Tiger Mask vs. Kobayashi and Martel vs. Tsuruta

DM: I was told the best match of the year in Japan was 11-2 in Tokyo with Choshu-Yatsu-Kobayashi vs. Strong Machine-Shunji Takano-Hiro Saito. The clips I saw of it indicated that was probably true, but since I didn't see enough of it I picked the best and most amazing bout I've ever seen--8/22 in Tokyo with Jaguar Yokota vs. Lioness Asuka in a battle of the Japanese girls. I've seen few bouts with better heat, none with better moves and possibly none with such a fast work-rate. Second I'll pick the Duggan vs. DiBiase match because it was a fantastic brawl and Tiger Mask vs. Kobayashi third. Really, all the bouts I considered are already listed elsewhere here, but the true standouts are Flair vs. Kerry Von Erich from St. Louis, Flair vs. Race from the Meadowlands, Tully Blanchard vs. Magnum T.A. from Starcade (not really a great match, just a brutal one which promised to be and lived up to it) and a six man tag from Japan that I did see with Tsuruta-Tenryu-Ishikawa vs. Cheshu-Khan-Hamaguchi.

BC: Lioness Asuka vs. Jaguar Yokota may be a ladies match, by my god was it fantastic. It may have been the best match I've ever seen. It definitely was the best ladies bout I've seen. Second is Tiger Mask vs. Kobayashi followed by Flair vs. Kerry Von Erich

SL: My criteria is the bout must be actually great and the three that stand out are: DiBiase vs. Duggan 3-22 from Houston; Flair vs. Kerry Von Erich 1-25 from St. Louis and Tiger Mask vs. Kobayashi 6-21 in Tokyo. A couple of Guerreros vs. Morton-Gibson bouts early in the year from Shreveport and Guerreros vs. DiBiase-Williams bouts from Houston in June stand out. The best from Japan were Inoki vs. Brody on 4-18, Choshu-Khan vs. Tsuruta-Tenryu on 8-2, Tiger Mask vs. Kobayashi on 3-9 and

and 8-31 plus Funks vs. Choshu-Yatsu that same card. I wasn't that impressed with Inoki vs. Fujinami on 9-19 as I'm not into those intense type matches. They get boring in spots.

- 1980 - Bruno Sammartino vs. Larry Zbyszko
- Bob Backlund vs. Ken Patera
- 1981 - Dusty Rhodes vs. Ric Flair
- Pat Patterson vs. Sgt. Slaughter
- 1982 - Ric Flair vs. Bob Backlund
- Tiger Mask vs. Dynamite Kid
- 1983 - Slaughter/Kernodle vs. Steamboat/Youngblood and Flair vs. Race
- 1984 - Freebirds vs. Von Erichs 7-4 in Fort Worth
- 1985 - Tiger Mask vs. Kuniaki Kobayashi 6-21 in Tokyo

CATEGORY B (based on first place votes)

BEST WRESTLING MANEUVER

1. TIGER MASK'S DIVES OUT OF RING.....71
2. Dynamite Kid's super superplex.....45
3. Lioness Asuka's giant swing.....7

MM: Tiger Mask's leaps are tremendous but so are others like La Fiera. The nuttiest must be Randy Savage and Bobby Eaton who break the falls with their knees. But my favorite is Dynamite Kid's top turnbuckle superplex.

DM: Lioness Asuka's giant swing. No matter how many times I see it, I can't believe it

BC: Tiger Mask's dive over the ropes with a flip. Dangerous and awesome.

SL: Dynamite Kid's super superplex. The move is more dramatic to me than Tiger Mask's dives since it's done in the ring. It really knocked me for a loop.

- 1981 - Jimmy Snuka's leap off top rope
- 1982 - Super Destroyer's superplex
- 1983 - Snuka's leap
- 1984 - Davey Boy Smith's power clean followed by Dynamite Kid's dropkick off the top ropes
- 1985 - Tiger Mask's dive with a flip outside the ring

ROOKIE OF THE YEAR

1. JACK VICTORY.....57
2. Keiji Mutoh.....37
3. Sean Michaels.....26
4. John Nord.....15
5. Shinya Hashimoto.....6

MM: We've got more than ever. Bigger and stronger and more being put over and doing angles than ever. Only one problem. Nobody has taught them how to wrestle. The instant stars I saw were all pretty bad, so green, stiff and totally lost as what to do. Jack Victory doesn't look too bad whereas Dave Peterson is still a stiff. Kendall Windham must be seen and heard to be believed. Their latest musclehead is Lex Luger, who is convincingly awful. I'll pick another stiff starter in John Nord, cause he's getting a chance, although Victory is a much better wrestler.

DM: The best newcomer I've ever seen is Keiji Mutoh. Once he gets a little toughness, he's a sure superstar. Victory and Michaels are both very good considering their lack of experience. Actually Victory is okay, period. Hashi-

I only saw once but was favorably impressed. Nord stinks and really shouldn't be considered.

- 1980 - Barry Windham
- 1981 - Brad Armstrong (tie)
- Brad Rheingans
- 1982 - Steve Williams
- 1983 - Road Warriors
- 1984 - Tom Zenk
- Keiichi Yamada (tie)
- 1985 - Jack Victory

HARDEST WORKER

1. RIC FLAIR.....122
2. Tiger Mask.....21
3. Animal Hamaguchi.....7
- Dynamite Kid.....7

MM: Factor in travel, quality of matches, angle requirements and ability displayed and you can't argue with picking Flair. Perhaps the hardest workers in the entire sport are the Japanese girls.

DM: Ric Flair, no question about it.

BC: Flair gives 100 percent night after night and sells to make his opponent look better than his best.

SL: Anyone that doesn't pick Ric Flair isn't a serious wrestling fan although Terry Funk, Animal Hamaguchi and Tiger Mask work very hard.

- 1983 - Dynamite Kid
- 1984 - Ric Flair
- 1985 - Ric Flair

BIGGEST SHOCK

1. WWF getting on network TV.....28
2. Wrestlemania hype.....17
3. Media explosion.....15
4. Death of Jay Youngblood.....13
5. Brody walking out on Baba.....12
6. Eddie Graham's suicide.....10

MM: It's sad, but unexpected deaths like Rick McGraw and Jay Youngblood are no longer a big shock anymore. Eddie Graham's suicide was a shock. Terry Funk joining WWF was a more traditional shock. Slaughter's utter ineffectiveness was a surprise, although the decline of the AWA really wasn't. The biggest shock was the success of Wrestlemania, as far as media exploitation, public recognition. It resulted in a Saturday morning cartoon, network TV and incredible merchandising.

DM: The incredible success of the WWF didn't shock me that much, but the way they were able to cross-over and market so many things which such success did. The pre-Wrestlemania publicity is something I still can't get over.

SL: Nothing more than Eddie Graham's suicide. Mike Von Erich's brush with death was pretty shocking

- 1981 - Tommy Rich winning NWA title
- 1982 - Otto Wanz winning AWA title
- 1983 - Harley Race winning NWA title
- 1984 - Death of David Von Erich
- 1985 - WWF getting on network TV

MOST DISGUSTING PROMOTIONAL TACTIC

1. USING MIKE VON ERICH'S BRUSH WITH DEATH TO SELL TICKETS.....57
2. Mr. T wrestling.....19
3. The Hillbilly routine.....11
4. Rock'n' Wrestling promotion.....8
5. Billing wrestlers who aren't going to appear.....6

DM: A close second this year is Fritz Von Erich and his pseudo religious rectitude, culminating at the Cotton Bowl and the appearance of "Ol' Mike," because Fritz wanted us to believe, "It's like Ol' Mike was resurrected..." That makes C' Mike Jesus, which I guess makes Fritz...you figure it out. Last year's winner, promotional deceptions still pertains, but I've got a better one. This single most sickening thing I've ever endured. It's grotesque, unspeakable--Vince McMahon's bastard child the rock'n'wrestling connection (do I have to credit the concept to Cyndi Lauper and Dave Wolff?). I detest it on two levels. It represents the whole cross-marketing moron aimed cartoon-strived approach of how to sell wrestling--only wrestling, the verb, has nothing to do with it. They have many excellent one-time wrestlers, but no wrestling takes place. It has forced changes that will near decimate the sport/business. It destroyed the facade of reality. It eliminated any sense of wonder. It destroyed any attempt at the suspension of disbelief. Pro Wrestling is much better off pretending to be legit, than being legit by not pretending anymore. Dancing and singing wrestlers and ranting and raving ego stroking rock stars do not a good time make. All I see is a bunch of self-fulfilling play-acting.

DM: I've seen poor taste, but the thing with Mike Von Erich truly saddened me.

SL: It's a late comer, the re-usage of the hangman's noose bouts in Florida at the end of the year. It's even worse that they'd have the gall to try that garbage again.

EC: Promoting wrestlers you know well in advance won't be there.

- 1981 - Usage of The Monster in LA.
- 1982 - Backlund as WWF champion
- 1983 - Pretending Eddie Gilbert had re-injured his neck after a serious car accident injured him in the first place
- 1984 - Blackjack Mulligan's phony heart attack in Florida
- 1985 - Usage of Mike Von Erich's near fatal illness to sell tickets

BEST TV ANNOUNCER

1. LANCE RUSSELL.....70
2. Jesse Ventura.....49
3. Bill Watts.....22
4. Nick Bockwinkel.....9
5. Jim Ross.....7

DM: The horrible outnumber the tolerable a dozen-to-one. There are a few good, if not great ones. There are good color commentators (Jesse Ventura) and good play-by-play men

(Watts). I can't ignore one-take studio produced jobs requiring interaction with the wrestlers to virtual voice-over and add-on jobs, so I'll go with Lance Russell who makes and runs the Memphis show week in and week out with a non-condescending smoothness that looked even better first hand.

DM: I'm not as down on these guys as in the past. The guys in the WWF are pretentious and obnoxious with the exception of Ventura, who looks good mainly because the excesses of the others. However on big shows, Jesse and Vince McMahon play their character to extremes of nausea, like the recent NBC special where I hated Ventura's overacting on the mic. Lance Russell is the best, with Bill Watts second for different reasons.

EC: Lance Russell is a true smooth operator. If he left Memphis, the show would really suffer. He means more to Memphis wrestling than Jimmy Hart or Jerry Lawler could ever dream of.

SL: Lance Russell is easily the best. Bill Watts is excellent and a close second. I also enjoy Jim Ross in Mid South and Dave Brown in Memphis. Jesse Ventura is a joy to listen to, but he's stuck with Lonsoon. Considering what he's broadcasting, Mark Lowrance in Fort Worth is also very good.

- 1981 - Gordon Solie
- 1982 - Gordon Solie
- 1983 - Gordon Solie
- 1984 - Lance Russell
- 1985 - Lance Russell

Thank you readers, Gordon Solie only received one vote this year.

BEST MANAGER

1. JILLY CORNETTE117
2. Bobby Heenan.....5
- Scandor Akbar/.....5

DM: I only considered two, and they were a toss-up. Jimmy Hart, the former clean-cut choice, submerged himself, however Bobby Heenan rose to the top as the WWF No. 1 heel manager. He's a bit wearisome on the mike since we've heard it all for 15 years. Much better, in fact, the best on the mike is Cornette, but he wasn't pushed as much and dealt with less variety. I picked Heenan, not my favorite, but the most useful.

DM: An easy category because what year has had so few good ones? Cornette is the obvious winner, and several things he's done to actually make the Express better wrestlers (ie teach them Japanese moves) is stuff few know about. Akbar, who isn't that good, is the only other one used effectively. Heenan is a cartoon character, so I can't take him seriously.

EC: Jim Cornette is my hero

SL: My choice is Akbar. He's the most effective. He's done well and been involved in the best angles.

- 1983 - Jimmy Hart
- 1984 - Jimmy Hart
- 1985 - Jimmy Cornette

READERS FAVORITE WRESTLER

1. RIC FLAIR.....	54
2. Terry Funk.....	14
3. Bruiser Brody.....	13
4. Riki Choshu.....	12
5. Ted DiBiase.....	11
6. Kuniaki Kobayashi.....	7
7. Dynamite Kid.....	7
8. Terry Gordy.....	6
9. Roddy Piper.....	5
10. Road Warriors.....	3

READERS MOST HATED WRESTLER

1. HULK HOGAN.....	54
2. Dusty Rhodes.....	23
3. Greg Gagne.....	8
4. Sgt. Slaughter.....	7
5. Andre the Giant.....	7

WORST WRESTLER

1. UNGLE ELMER.....	30
2. Lance Vaughn Erich.....	22
3. Kendall Windham.....	19
4. Cousin Junior.....	17
5. George Steele.....	11

WORST TAG TEAM

1. THE HILLBILLIES.....	89
2. The Freedom Fighters.....	11
3. Bundy & Studd.....	9
4. Jarrett & Yamamoto.....	7
5. The Batten Twins.....	5

WORST TV SHOW

1. Florida.....	51
2. All-American Wrestling.....	28
3. Central States.....	24
4. Prime Time Wrestling.....	18
5. Pro Wrestling USA.....	17

WORST MANAGER

1. MR. FUJI.....	38
2. Paul Jones.....	23
3. Sheik Kaisey.....	20
4. Tom Branch.....	19
5. Sunshine.....	14
6. Fred Blassie.....	11
7. Percy Fringle.....	10

WORST TV ANNOUNCEE

1. GORILLA MONSOON.....	35
2. Gene Okerlund.....	21
3. Bill Mercer.....	19
4. Lord Al Hayes.....	14
5. Vince McMahon.....	11
6. Rod Truongard.....	10

WORST FEUD

1. SLAUGHTER VS ZHUKOV.....	47
2. Andre vs. Studd.....	38
3. Von Erichs vs Gino/Chris.....	11

WORST ON INTERVIEWS

1. THUNDERBOLT PATTERSON.....	23
2. Lance Vaughn Erich.....	20
3. Mike Von Erich.....	17
4. Kerry Von Erich.....	15
5. Andre the Giant.....	14
6. Buck Zumhofe.....	14

WORST MATCH

1. ALBANO VS. BLASSIE.....	19
2. Andre vs. Studd.....	13
3. Wahoo vs Voodoo Malumba.....	13
4. Hogan vs. Piper.....	8
5. Flair vs. Rhodes.....	8

1985 AWARDS POLL

Ratings based on total points from 37 ballots cast and placing in previous polls listed.

	84	83	82
1. Ric Flair.....	1	1	1
2. Dynamite Kid.....	2	5	47
3. Ted DiBiase.....	20	8	3
4. Stan Hansen.....	9	7	10
5. Bruiser Brody.....	3	2	6
6. Riki Choshu.....	6	13	--
7. Tatsumi Fujinami.....	8	16	35
8. Terry Gordy.....	11	9	--
9. Bobby Eaton.....	56	73	--
10. Randy Savage.....	18	55	74
11. Chris Adams.....	58	53	--
12. Ricky Steamboat.....	10	21	23
13. Akira Maeda.....	24	--	--
14. Tiger Mask.....	29	--	--
15. Terry Funk.....	52	50	20
16. Butch Reed.....	7	14	27
17. Davey Boy Smith.....	5	--	--
18. Rick Martel.....	35	66	43
19. Yoshiaki Yatsu.....	30	57	--
20. Kuniaki Kobayashi.....	32	--	--
21. Kerry Von Erich.....	19	38	44
22. Genichiro Tenryu.....	67	--	--
23. Animal Hamaguchi.....	26	46	--
24. Paul Orndorff.....	13	11	11
25. Tully Blanchard.....	61	70	--
26. The Cobra.....	12	--	--
27. Nobuhiko Takada.....	21	--	--
28. Jim Duggan.....	70	49	--
29. Terry Taylor.....	65	--	--
30. Dick Murdoch.....	51	73	33
31. Harley Race.....	27	15	4
32. Satoru Sayama.....	4	19	22
33. Jumbo Tsuruta.....	38	28	21
34. Black Tiger.....	42	51	--
35. Chevo Guerrero.....	22	17	67
36. Roddy Piper.....	34	18	9
37. Bret Hart.....	48	--	--
38. Steve Williams.....	--	--	--
39. Brad Armstrong.....	63	--	--
40. Buddy Landel.....	--	--	--
41. El Canek.....	44	45	--
42. Dick Slater.....	17	25	28
43. Magnum T.A.....	45	--	--
44. Antonio Inoki.....	--	42	19
45. Yoshiaki Fujiwara.....	68	--	--
46. Hiro Saito.....	--	--	--
47. Hector Guerrero.....	--	--	--
48. La Fiera.....	--	--	--
49. Kengo Kimura.....	39	--	--
50. Buzz Sawyer.....	47	23	26
51. Pirata Morgan.....	--	--	--
52. Bor Orton.....	16	12	29
53. Greg Valentine.....	46	22	37
54. Ricky Morton.....	--	--	--
55. Nick Bockwinkel.....	74	26	8
56. Michael Hayes.....	--	--	--
57. The Grappler.....	--	--	--
58. Keiji Mutoh.....	--	--	--
59. Dos Caras.....	64	37	64
60. Robert Gibson.....	--	--	--
61. Jerry Lawler.....	57	33	30
62. Arn Anderson.....	--	--	--
63. Kevin Von Erich.....	28	32	55
64. Koko Ware.....	--	--	--
65. Super Strong Machine.....	--	--	--
66. Dennis Condrey.....	--	--	--
67. Barry Windham.....	25	36	--
68. Jesse Barr.....	--	--	--
69. Badnews Allen.....	40	--	--
70. Arn Anderson.....	--	--	--
71. Ron Starr.....	62	--	--
72. Killer Khan.....	55	38	36
73. Eddie Gilbert.....	--	--	--
74. Keith Howard.....	59	--	--
75. Krusher Khrushchev.....	--	--	--

it'll negate whatever chance there was of the Crush Girls really showing their stuff, however she's still tons better than any of Moolah's girls, so it's an improvement over what could have been. . . . Ohigusa Nagayo still out with an ankle and knee injury, and the Crush Girls have been stripped of the tag belts because 12/12 and 1/5 title defenses against the heir apparents for their status as the clean-cut cutesy team, Itzumi Yamazaki (who is great, and great-looking to boot) & Noriyo Tateno. The title was decided 1/5 in Tokyo with Yamazaki & Tateno winning 2 of 3 from Bull Nakano & Condo Saito, two of the punk rockers. On 1/9 they defeated Nakano & Dump via DQ to retain the belts. . . . Actually Nagayo appeared 1/4 at Korauken Hall in a 6-man, but re-injured her knee the first night back. . . . The promoter of this group, Mr. Matsunaga, wants to promote a Wrestlemania-type show using Cyndi Lauper holding a combination concert and wrestling card, with Lauper and the Crush Girls doing a joint concert. The Crush Girls did a well-received concert in Nagoya in late December and their albums are cross-marketing successes in Japan.

New Japan: This group opened 1/3 before an SRO crowd of 2,650 at Korauken Hall with Koshinaka & Hoshino DOR Scorpio & Tony St. Clair, Mike Miller & Johnny Mantell beat Nagasaki & Tatsutoshi Gotoh via DQ, Cobra pinned Black Tiger (very good match), Akira Maeda pinned Nobuhiko Takada (more on that later), Fujinami & Kimura (recognized by this group as World tag team champions by virtue of their recent tournament win) beat Wakamatsu's new team the Mad Maxes via DQ (told Maxes are terrible) and Inoki DOR Jim Duggan (Inoki suffered a severe legit back injury in this bout, continued wrestling remainder of the week but as of 1/9 it got so bad that he was pulled from cards for a while). . . . The UWF guys either wrestle each other or in prelims. They work a semi-UWF style, in other words amateur wrestling form without amateur intensity--translated that means great technical wrestling, and boring as hell. They don't use the ropes or fly, and mainly just work on the mat. What made UWF interesting was the severe contact blows, which have been eliminated. I don't think this style is appealing enough to work for the average pro fan. It certainly wouldn't in this country. . . . Inoki apparently just missed a few dates, returning 1/9.

All Japan: Group opened 1/1 before a sellout at Korauken Hall with Riki Choshu winning a Martial Arts fight with Tom Magee at 2:13 of the second round of a scheduled 10 round match. They realized Magee couldn't actually wrestle Choshu so they brought him in billed as an all-around fighter and it was billed as wrestling skill vs karate, boxing and gymnastic skill and powerlifting. Also The Russians (Nikita & Krushchev) beat Yatsu & Teranishi. . . . 1/2 Tokyo also sold out as Tsuruta & Tenryu beat Russians via DQ and Tiger Mask DOR Mascoras. 1/3 also sold out in Tokyo with Tsuruta-Tenryu-Tiger Mask DOR Choshu-Yatsu-Kobayashi. . . . All Japan tours Taiwan 2/13 to 2/18. If you remember, Inoki did an exceedingly successful tour to Taiwan late last year. . . . Barry Windham & Mike Rotundo debuted, billed as the U.S.A. Express beating Tsuruta & Ishikawa on 1/9 in Iwakuni. They'll challenge Tsuruta & Tenryu later on tour.

WWE: Results from 12/30 at MSG were S.D. Jones beat Ron Shaw, Neidhart drew Blair, Hernandez beat Rivera, Adonis pinned Poffo (the gimmick vs. the reality), Savage beat Hogan via count out, Studd pinned Atlas, Brunzell pinned Bret Hart and Valentine-Beefcake beat Elmer-Jim. . . . Cousin Junior walked out just before the 12/17 Tampa taping and Gene Lewis was a late minute replacement. . . . Same night in Detroit as JYP pinned Funk, Ventura beat Santana-COR, Steamboat pinned Muraco, Kirchner pinned Volkoff etc before 14,960. . . . 12/20 Toronto saw Steamboat win a Battle Royal, Steamboat-Tonga beat Valentine-Beefcake non-title, Atlas beat Muraco-DQ, Kirchner lost to Volkoff, Bravo pinned Neidhart. . . . 1/10 in Pittsburgh drew a sellout 10,000 as Kid Smith beat Hart-Neidhart, Andre beat Bundy-COR, Piper DQ Grndorf, Muraco pinned Steamboat using ropes. . . . Wrestlemania II takes place 3/31--no details yet.

Mid South: Caught the first TV tape from Tulsa and it was a fast-paced upbeat show like we're used to. The technical work is much better and atmosphere much improved although product itself has pretty well remain unchanged. They will tape in both Tulsa and Oklahoma City on a bi-weekly basis, doing two tapes per show, plus several dark match main events will be held as well. Crowds at first two tapes were excellent. . . . Slater feuding with Jake Roberts and Taylor over the WA title. . . . DiBisce-Williams duo facing Murdoch with either Slater, Sawyer or Superstar. . . . A jr. heavy tourney still being mentioned. . . . Lane-Keirn start 1/19 with Shepherders arriving 1/23.

Memphis: 12/30 Lawler-Dundee bout drew more than 10,000, and after watching the TV show 12/28, I'm not surprised. The interviews were out of this world. Lawler can't come back with a mask, and even has been taken off the opening as have Lane-Keirn. Circuit now revolves around Dundee, Fantastics, Mantell and Rick Casey. 12/30 bout was fantastic, by the way. Lawler had powder thrown in his eye by Tony Falk breaking up a Casey-Mantell brawl, so went in with a bandage over his eye. Dundee pretty much destroyed him with dozens of near-falls, Lawler then, covered with blood, makes the comeback but Falk ends up throwing powder in his good eye and he loses and his gone for six months. . . . Falk is doing the Jack Hart gimmick of always losing each week at arena and TV, but getting good better. Falk always tells Lance Russell that he and Ric Flair have a lot in common, but Lance can't see what they have in common. . . . Freedom Fighters are now ranked out and called the Blade Runners. The "little" one (Pond Warrior Hawk-size) looks like the villain in Rocky IV. They wear lipstick and punk hairdos. They're more interesting, but they still stink. . . . Dundee wrestled Big Red in the main event last week which didn't draw, and was dq'd vs Austin Idol this past Monday (1/13). . . . Fantastics won a tourney for vacant tag belts (Lawler & Idol were champs) on 1/13. This group is really hurting, but Dundee is a great heel.

Central States: 2/8 St. Louis has Flair vs Race non-title in a cage so you know the result, Rock'n'Roll vs Midnight, Bockwinkel vs Zbyezko, Tully vs Aliant, Kareem Muhammad vs Blackwell. . . . Flair vs Brody 2/6 in Kansas City. . . . 1/6 KC saw Brody DQ Bob Brown and Race pin Edcar Thomas before 1,600. *Kevin Kelly has as Kevin Florida:* Jesse Barr is in. . . . Lane & Keirn made a few dates here. *The Magnificent Portland:* 1/21 big show has Flair vs Dusty, TA-Roadies vs 3 Russians (probably now just a tag), Billy Jack vs Cliver. . . . Haynes and Oliver both in full-time. Tom Zenk & Scott Doring are tag champs, Jagers singles champ.

Texas All-star: Brody's first TV appearances as a heel were great. He comes out of an ambulance, siren blasting holding a stretcher. Then beats up foe, puts them on stretcher, kicks them off, and puts them back on before shoving them in ambulance. Told his arena bouts only last 2:00. He's working mainly with Kim-la, another heel, which should further establish his role confusion.

Northern California notes: Musical TV slots here. WWP now on KPTV, Ch. 2, the leading independent. Ch. 20, which had WWP, is back with Verne, while Ch. 26, which had Verne, now has Crockett's excellent World Wide Wrestling show. . . . Crockett/Verne plan on promoting in Oakland Auditorium in late Feb, early March but those plans could change. . . . Polynesians coming in 2/13 San Jose, 2/14 Las Vegas and 2/15 at the Olympic Auditorium in LA with Lawler vs Snuka, Roper vs Rocky Johnson, Ricky Johnson vs Sullivan, a strap match with Strongbow Jr. vs Jack Armstrong, 10 girl Battle Royal to create NWA women's title, Fujinami vs Nagasaki plus Inoki booked. I'm told Snuka probably won't appear in any US bouts.

DAVE BELTZER
WRESTLING OPERATOR
111 CLIFFORD #7
TURLOCK, CA 95380-4663

